

## Bloomfield Record.

From the St. Louis Republican.

### A Marvellous Narrative.—A Man Almost Loses His Identity.

There is a trial involving a most marvellous question of identity now progressing in court at Malone, Franklin county, N. Y. If the case were not in court, and engaging the attention of the Judges, lawyers and many witnesses, some of the developments would be incredible, and set down as a groundless fabrication. We give an outline of the reported facts.

Two years ago Willis Peyton, a farmer of Franklin county, New York, left home with the usual baggage of a traveller and a patent right model of a spring bed, and several letters of introduction to parties South. His business was to sell rights. He was 40 years of age, and had a wife and several children, some of whom were well grown. He wrote to his family from Terre Haute that he was feeling ill, but would push on to Evansville, where he had a friend, David Weaver, with whom he intended to spend a few days before going further South. Here the old Willis Peyton was lost to the world and to himself, and a new man seemed to grow in his place, still clinging to Willis Peyton's memory, and some marks which were on Willis Peyton's body. He has given his story under oath, and it is briefly this:

After leaving Terre Haute he lost all consciousness, but somehow got into a hospital at Evansville, where he first found himself recovering from small-pox. He was then bald, and when he resumed his clothing every article appeared to have been made for a much smaller man. The pantaloons, which he recognized as his, where at least six inches too short. He could get no trace of his money, watch, model spring bed, or other effects.

When he was released from the hospital he went to his friend David Weaver, who spurned him as an impostor. He was, in fact, a horrible sight, and looked like the Wandering Jew, or some other walking pestilence.

Weaver's remarks about his friend Willis Peyton's personality caused him to examine himself, and he found he had grown eight inches taller in as many weeks. He would have denied his own identity if it had not been for his mind and other evidences that had been familiar to him from childhood. Of course he could not continue his contemplated journey, for he had lost its objects and bearings. He went to an engine house and looked into a mirror, and did not even recognize his face. He first thought of suicide, and his next thought was of home. The latter prevailed. He was utterly lost and started to find himself. On the way he was taken ill again, and once more all the world was a blank.

He finally arrived at his own door after an absence of two years. Willis Peyton's family believed him dead. The Willis Peyton who had left that threshold two years before had light hair, nearly red, and a very scanty beard and was thin in flesh. The Willis Peyton who now knocked at the door was much taller, rounder, and had brown curly hair, and a heavy beard. He looked like a gross lie on the former, with no truth in him; but the sequel is startling. He knocked and was invited into the house of the "Widow Peyton," and took a seat. Looking at Mrs. Peyton he said: "I suppose you don't know me, Addie?" She answered, "No sir, I do not; who are you?" The man burst into tears and said: "You'll not believe me, I know, when I tell you; but it's got to come some time, and might as well now as not. I'm Willis Peyton."

Mrs. Peyton shrank from him, ordered him out of doors, and two of her sons and a hired man took him to the nearest Justice, who sent him to jail as a lunatic. He was tried by a commission for lunacy, and was adjudged perfectly sane. He is now being tried before the Surrogate on the question of his pretensions as the husband of Mrs. Peyton and the owner of the Peyton property. He has told his story the main points of which we have given; has related in court circumstances that occurred before the same judge years before; told the lawyers many things that a stranger, such as he seems to be, could not know: related Willis Peyton's family history, giving some minute details which are strictly correct and generally known in the neighborhood, and even reminded Mrs. Peyton of words spoken during her courtship, which supposed no one knew but her husband and herself. It seems highly probable he will be able to establish his identity, incredible as it may appear.

The principal evidence in his favor is that furnished by several marks and scars on his person, and this is unimpeachable. Willis Peyton, when a lad, received a severe cut in the instep, which left a bad scar. The metamorphosed Willis Peyton has the scar. He had a tattoo mark of an American shield on his right arm. The shield is there. Another evidence that the claimant is the simon-pure Willis Peyton is that he singles out men, who do not know him, calling them by name and reminding them of incidents of a former acquaintance that leave no doubt in their minds as to his identity.

And the "Widow Peyton" sits in the court room by turns looking at the claimant to her bed and board, and crying as witness after witness avows his belief that the strange man is Willis Peyton, he may have the farm, stock, and everything but herself. Sometimes during passages of the trial he implores her to look again and see if she cannot recognize one feature, and acknowledge him as her husband, but she refuses, and his earnest, appealing face suddenly becomes clouded by despair. He says if the suit terminates in his favor he will only ask a living off the farm, and will never intrude upon his wife and children unless they voluntarily recognize him.

## Love and Music.

She was a music teacher. He played the piano fairly well. They lived next door. It was one of those wooden cities so common in this country, where each house stands alone in its little garden. It was summer time, and evening. All the windows were open, and from every side came scraps and bits of music from sundry pianos, voices and instruments. A flute wailed over the way, where the "engaged" man lived. A voice and a piano duetted where the young married folks lived, and the young thing who was "paying attentions" to the First Baptist soprano was trying the bass of certain touching psalms. In the midst of it all she, the music teacher, began a slumber song. Then the others paused to listen. When she stopped there was a pause, and then he played a Kinder Lied. Silence all round. Then she indulged in a waltz. She felt better. Then he gaped, musically speaking. She did not seem to be in that mood, and she replied in "A song without words." It was touching. Then he played a bit of the Moonlight Sonata. She took, and replied with "five o'clock in the morning." The flute fellow, the young couple, and all the rest of the neighbors sat up in bed or in their chairs, held their breaths and listened. It was becoming interesting. Every note could be heard. The moonlight fell through the trees, and it was very calm and still. The dorgue boomed fitfully. Then he played, "Come rest in this bosom," and some of them stuffed the sheets in their mouths to keep from laughing. Then there was a pause as if she did not know what to give next. Then she played, "O fair dove, O fond love," or music to that effect. There was a suspicion of laughter in the air, but the two heard it not. When she finished, he too paused a moment, and then in a sweet, tender manner played "I would that my love." It was too much. Some one laughed. Some more laughed. A baby woke up and cried horribly, and somebody "chooled" it. The laughter filled the night with din. A certain window came down with a slam, and a piano was heard to shut with a bang. For all that they were married within a month.—*Vox Humana.*

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